ABSTRACT

The thesis purposes is to explore how project managers work with project management in practice and as well study the relevance and applicability of the traditional frameworks in project-based companies.

In this study we have focused on success factors and success criteria. The former refers project management, whereas the latter focus on the most important criteria upon which the project is being measured against (project objectives). We used Pinto and Slevin (1987) and Shenhar et al. (2001) in order to analyze our data.

The findings in the study showed that all three projects were managed differently but all were perceived as successful due to high customer satisfactions. The main findings in Critical Success Factors were the importance of client consultation, communication, control over the budget and time schedule throughout the whole project life cycle. Trouble-shooting should also be highlighted with an emphasis on flexibility during the planning and execution phase. Lastly, technical task was not of importance during project implementation. The main results in success criteria and the most crucial aspects for determining project success was customer satisfaction and meeting the budget- and time-schedule. The second finding was the importance of exceeding the client’s expectations. Lastly, the evaluation of project success according to long and future time where not of interest to project managers.

Key words: Success Factors, Success Criteria, The Factor School, Project Managers, and Project-based companies
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, we would like to thank our supervisor Fredrik Tell for his valuable guidance throughout this process. Secondly, we would like to show our gratitude to our fellow peers for taking the time to provide feedback on our thesis during the seminars. Lastly, we would like to thank the participants in this study, for their willingness to participate and sharing their experiences with us.

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2017-05-29
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT-BASED COMPANIES

1.2 PUBLIC RELATION FIRMS

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.4 PURPOSE

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTION

2 THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

2.1 THE FACTOR SCHOOL

2.2 CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS AND CRITERIA

2.2.1 PROJECT SUCCESS: PROJECT OBJECTIVES

2.2.2 PROJECT SUCCESS: THE PROJECT LIFE CYCLE

2.2.3 PROJECT SUCCESS: UNDERSTANDING THE KEY SUCCESS FACTORS IN ORDER TO IMPROVE PROJECT MANAGEMENT

2.3 CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR FRAMEWORK

2.3.1 THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT (PIP)

2.3.2 MULTIDIMENSIONAL STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

2.4 DISCUSSION ON CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

3 METHOD

3.1 EMBEDDED CASE STUDY

3.1.1 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

3.2 DATA SELECTION

3.3 DATA COLLECTION

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

3.4.1 INTERVIEW DATA ANALYSIS

3.4.2 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

3.5 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

3.5.1 ETHICAL DILEMMAS

3.5.2 CRITICAL APPROACH ON THE INTERVIEWEES

4 EMPIRICAL DESCRIPTION

4.1 PROJECT A – THE EAGLE PROJECT

4.1.1 PROJECT MANAGEMENT

4.1.2 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

4.2 PROJECT B – THE INTRANET PROJECT

4.2.1 PROJECT MANAGEMENT

4.2.2 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

4.3 PROJECT 3 – THE RE-BRANDING PROJECT

4.3.1 PROJECT MANAGEMENT

4.3.2 PROJECT OBJECTIVES
**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSF</td>
<td>Critical Success Factor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>Success Criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM</td>
<td>Project Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A&amp;Q</td>
<td>The fictive name for the case company in this study.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1 Introduction

A significant body of research regarding project success reflects the assessment of what a successful project is and what factors appear to lead to project success (Pinto, 1986). Söderlund (2010) constructed a categorization to be used as a tool for analysing project success – the so-called seven schools of thought. The seven schools of thought include the Optimization School, Behavioural School, Factor school, Contingency School, Governance School, Relationship School and the Decision School. These categories were crafted in order to provide a more profound comprehension of the existing literature on project success. Söderlund (2010) divided different research papers into seven categories depending on scholars’ method, research question, theory and aim. Studies with the purpose to investigate which factors lead to project success by targeting project management are called the Factor School. The significance of examining or studying success factors is vindicated by the high rate of project failures and the conviction that the recognition of these aspects would improve the implementation of projects.

Traditionally, scholars merely focused on which the critical success factors and criteria are and how respective factor influence a project’s outcome, and for a long period of time the method for determining the project success was based on the iron triangle: cost, time and quality (De Wit, 1988; Atkinson, 1999). Recent years have introduced a development in this debate where scholars instead argue that these three success criteria are not comprehensive or sufficient enough to determine the successfulness of a project, since history have shown that projects that have exceed the budget and time restrictions have still been perceived as successful. Thus to determine what contributes to project success scholars further made the distinction between critical success factors and success criteria in order to create a more comprehensive and accurate picture of what project success should entail and what is should be measured against (Pinto and Slevin, 1987; Clarke, 1999; Cooke-Davis, 2002). Scholars distinguish the concepts by defining success factors as circumstances or influences that might
affect the outcome of a project, and success criteria as standards or principles that judge the project (Lim and Mohammed, 1999). They have argued that external factors and critical success factors are crucial when determining a project’s success, since projects that have exceeded the budget or the time schedule has been perceived as successful – the most famous example is the Sydney Opera House. The project of the Sydney Opera House surpassed the budget and the time schedule substantially. It was a failure on a management level, but the building is today one of the most visited buildings and one of the most popular buildings associated with Sydney. This lead scholars to include principles such as organizational benefits, customer satisfaction, business success, and as well considering the time aspect the short-and long-term objectives (Pinto and Slevin, 1987; De Wit, 1988; Saarinen, 1990; Lipovetsky et al. 1997; Ballantine et al. 1996; Wateridge, 1998; Atkinson, 1999: Lim and Mohammed, 1999; Shenhar et al. 2001). Pinto and Slevin (1987) developed a framework where they listed the ten most important factors in project management. These were factors that would enhance the possibility of success by incorporating Communication, Mission, Schedule/Plans, and Management Support among others. Shenhar et al. (2001) established a “multidimensional strategic framework” where they listed the most important project objectives that projects should be evaluated when determining project success such as project efficiency, impact on customer, business success and future success.

1.1 Project-based companies

In the project-based companies the organizational models are developed around the completing projects (Whitley, 2006). Project-based companies ever-changing environment necessitates that these organizations continually evolve to be adaptable and agile. The evolution is especially imperative in their management, which is subject to structuring the administration and management of contextual uncertainties (Hodgson, 2004). Notably, active individual and situated actions are vital in coordination and synchronization of the organizations’ projects. Such companies require more than just resources and standardized project models for effective project portfolio management (Brady and Davies, 2004). Project-intensive organizations are subjected to significant time pressures and project practices that are always changing and thus it requires flexibility, which in turn increases the importance of collaborative and communicative management (De Meyer et al. 2002).
For most times, project-based companies have no surplus resources available. The routine in these groups consists of management of resources allocation, project selection, and prioritization. Active individual and situated actions are vital in coordination and synchronization of projects (Sahlin-Andersson and Söderholms, 2002). The organization can build processes for adaptation to change through acknowledging the reality of regular uncertainties in their project work. Project-intensive firms such as PR companies have to juggle between numerous clients and projects (Crawford et al. 2005). Knowledge of project management methods is vital in efficiently undertaking this workload. Additionally, processes of these companies are similar to those of project management. They include an analysis of the situation, strategizing, implementation and evaluation of the strategies (Söderlund, 2004). The firms’ focus on longevity and survival does in some instances put them at odds with the temporary nature in their business context. Reconciliation of flexibility in projects and the pressure to increase efficiency and reliability is paramount (Sydow et al. 2004). Through this, they can increase their competitiveness and profitability.

1.2 Public Relation firms
PR-firms are a typical example of a project-based company since PR-firms only work with projects, and hence a perfect example of a project-based company.

Public relations firms are often called “the link” between the companies and their publics. PR-firms work within different areas such as: public affairs, marketing communication, corporate communication and crisis. PR-firms focus on promoting their clients through communication by receiving coverage in, among other things, editorials, magazines, websites, blogs, and TV-programs. They apply various of communication strategies in order to achieve their objectives and this can be done by speech writing, debate articles, distribution of press releases, pitches and arranging events in order to raise awareness among the clients’ crucial stakeholders, and naturally these communication strategies and the target audience vary depending on the client and the aim (Roetzer, 2012). Nevertheless the highly competitive market in the industry has decreased in profit margins (Matinsson, 2014). The competition is fierce and the profit margins are tightening. The profitability question is crucial for firms’ survival and growth. The services that a firm should provide have become more demanded and PR-firms need to stay competitive by offering added value service their
clients, and meet their expectations. Another important shift in the market is that monthly retainers are reduced and projects are increasing meaning. This trend is challenging for firms when planning the economy and in order for the firms to become profitable, projects need to be managed efficiently (Matinsson, 2014). Since PR-firms are project-based companies their profits derives mainly from how well their projects are being managed; that is income from client – consultant hours spent on a project = profit. Therefore it is of great importance for PR-firms to manage projects efficiently in order to increase their profitability.

1.3 Problem statement

Due to the uncertainties of project outcome and the high rate of project failure, studying project success is justified by the notion that projects success can be achieved when project managers are aware of the different critical success factors that enhances the possibilities for project success (Pinto and Prescott, 1990). Previous research makes a distinction between critical success factors and success criteria. The former refers to the project management, where there are several factors that project managers should follow in order to enhance the possibility for project success. The latter focus on the project objectives meaning the criteria that the project is being measured against.

Previous research provides the academia and practitioners with studies on how to manage projects in order for projects to be successful. Different frameworks have emerged in order to concretize and guide both scholars and practitioners by identifying success factors and criteria that contribute to success. These frameworks also function as tools for organizations to determine whether they are on a right path or not by providing organizations with useful information regarding the effectiveness and productivity when measured against different criteria (Clarke, 1999; Ishaq-Bhatti et al. 2014). Critical success factors and success criteria can help managing, measuring, analysing and comparing the performance, assuming that the organization knows what objectives to work with (Wouters and Wilderom, 2008; Pinto and Prescott, 1988).

Although there is vast amount literature on project management there is a lack of practical studies on how managers actually work with projects in practice. Thus, this raises the question of whether project managers are aware of how to conduct projects according to the traditional frameworks provided by previous research. Secondly, no studies have been
performed on project-based companies. This is an aspect which is imperative to study because managing projects efficiently is of particularly importance for project-based firm since their profit derives from how well the resources are being managed. Regarding the intense competition, it is important for project managers to conduct projects efficiently, hence our decision to conduct our study on a PR-firm.

1.4 Purpose

The purpose with this study is to explore how project managers work with project management in practice and to study the relevance and applicability of the traditional frameworks for project-based companies. The former is of practical contribution whereas the latter concerns theoretical contribution. The paper studied how project managers work with different success factors and success criteria during a project’s life cycle to determine how they work with the different critical success factors and success criteria.

The aim was to close the existing gap by providing practical and theoretical knowledge within the field of project management for both the academia and practitioners. The former was achieved by interviewing project managers and how they conducted projects throughout the project life cycle. Secondly, based on the first gap, conclude the traditional frameworks’ applicability and relevance for project-based companies.

1.5 Research Question

How do project managers work with critical success factors and success criteria in projects?
2 The history and development of Critical Success Factors

The iron triangle – cost, time and quality – was for a long period of time the only concept that scholars considered when determining project success. However, the iron triangle’s inadequacy has been argued by many scholars, which consider that a project cannot only be determined based on this notion. Scholars have therefore identified that other CSFs must be taken into account, such as short-long term goals, stakeholders’ perspective and customer satisfaction. This chapter discusses previous research on critical success factors and success criteria as well as present the two main frameworks within the field of CSFs and Success Criteria, which we used when analysing our data.

2.1 The Factor School

Söderlund (2002; 2010) argues that in order for researcher to create a better understanding of the existing literature on project management a distinction needs to be made among the published articles. As aforementioned, he proposed a categorization of the seven schools of thought (the Optimization School, the Behavioral School, the Factor school, the Contingency School, the Governance School, the Relationship School and the Decision School). Söderlund’s (2010) categorization was based on previous researches’ methodological approach, the underlying theory in the articles, the research questions and the use of different concepts. Thus, these categories generate a deeper understanding over the different fields and subfields in the literature (see figure 1). The different schools embrace the pluralism in the project management, which in turn will lead to enhanced navigation between the fragmentations, specialization in the literature and provide better comprehension and awareness of different project challenges. This thesis’ focus lies within the Factor School since we will explore how project managers in practice with CFS and SC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key questions/issues investigated</th>
<th>Dominant project idea</th>
<th>Project management maxim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Optimization School</td>
<td>How to manage/plan a project?</td>
<td>Complex set of activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor School</td>
<td>What determines project success?</td>
<td>Complex task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingency School</td>
<td>Why do projects differ?</td>
<td>Organizational structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour School</td>
<td>How do projects behave?</td>
<td>Organizational process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance School</td>
<td>How are projects governed?</td>
<td>Complex transaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship School</td>
<td>How are the early stages of projects managed and how are projects formed?</td>
<td>Multi-sector network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision School</td>
<td>Why are projects instigated, why do they continue to live?</td>
<td>Large-scale investment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. Söderlund’s (2010) Seven thoughts of school.
2.2 Critical Success factors and criteria

Scholars have tried to identify different critical success factors that are crucial for project success (Avot, 1969; Kerzner, 1987; Pinton and Slevin, 1987, 1988; Clarke, 1999; Morris and Hughes, 1987), and also distinguish between success criteria and success factor in order to determine project success (Lim and Mohamed, 1999; Cooke-Davis, 2002; Muller and Jugdev, 2012). The vast body of research regarding the investigation of critical success factors in projects is justified due to high rates of project failure, and an identification of CSF would improve the project implementation and enhance the chances for project success (Söderlund, 2002, 2010).

Lim and Mohamed (1999) define criteria and factors as following “Criteria are the set of principles or standards by which judgment is made; whereas factors are the set of circumstances, facts, or influences which contribute to the result” (Lim and Mohammed, 1999:243). Meaning that factors are an can have a positive effect on a project that would increase the possibilities for project success or create difficulties in reaching project success – a project’s outcome can be explained by factors, whereas success criteria are a set of criterions, which a project’s success is measured against (Söderlund, 2002).

Figure 2 Lim and Mohammed, 1999.
De Wit (1988) insinuates how good project management success can increase the likelihood for project success, but it cannot prevent a project from failing or the other way around (a project can be successful despite poor project management). Causes for this may be external factors that influence a project’s success. De Wit (1988) illustrates his argument with the Sea North Project. The project, which was initiated in the 1970s resulted in enormous losses, they had exceeded the budget and the time schedule substantially. Nonetheless, the project was perceived as successful and was profitable due to the increase of the oil prices in 1973 and 1979. With this as foundation, the project became a success because of the factors that influenced, even though project management perceived as a failure. In this case project management success is measured against traditional criterions i.e. the iron triangle (cost, time and quality), whereas project success is measured against a project’s overall objectives (Cooke-Davis, 2002). Project success varies depending on the criteria and the objectives that the project is being measured against.

2.2.1 Project Success: Project objectives

The iron triangle has been the most predominated criteria for measuring project success, however recent years have led scholars de Wit (1988), Lipovetsky et al. (1997), Atkinson (1999), Clarke (1999) and Shenhar et al. (2001) to argue by regarding the iron triangle’s inadequacy, and that the iron triangle should not be the only success criteria when measuring project success.

De Wit (1988) discusses how the iron triangle is a good project management control, but that it simultaneously should not be the only success criteria when measuring project success. Instead De Wit (1988) elucidates the importance of project objectives – the project objectives should be the foundation when determining whether a project has been successful or not. An issue with project objectives that it can prove problematic to measure when one considers all the different stakeholders’ interests, since one party might find a project successful while another party does not find the outcome of a project successful. Constituting the great importance to distinguish the different stakeholders definition of project success (Davies, 2014).
2.2.2 Project Success: The project life cycle

A project’s life cycle can be divided into four stages – initiation, planning, execution or development, and project termination (Adams and Brandt, 1978; Slevin and Pinto, 1987; Pinto and Prescott, 1988). Pinto and Prescott (1988) discuss that in order for project success to be achieved, project managers must be aware of how the different critical success factors might vary during the project life cycle, meaning that some CSFs might be more important during a specific life cycle. The different factors will be discussed more thoroughly under the section 2.31.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase I Conceptualization</th>
<th>Phase II Planning</th>
<th>Phase III Execution</th>
<th>Phase IV Termination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Mission</td>
<td>Top Management</td>
<td>Schedule/Plans</td>
<td>Client Acceptance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client Consultation</td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>Client Consultation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Client Consultation</td>
<td>Technical Tasks</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Trouble-Shooting</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Client Consultation</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Monitoring and Feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Concluding that the project life cycle plays a crucial part when it comes to measuring project success since a project can be perceived as successful one day and the next day the same project can be classified as a failure. This has to do with the short- and long term goals with a project and stakeholder goals (De Wit, 1988; Shenhar et al. 2001; Muller and Jugdev, 2012). Managers have for instance the responsibility to put emphasis on the budget and the time frame because they are often judged by these short-term criteria (Shenhar et al. 2001). Scholars have demonstrated this issue by illustrating how projects that have not been completed on time or/and exceeded the budget were considered to be successful because the end-customer was very satisfied with the outcome. (De Wit, 1988; Atkinson, 1999; Lim & Mohamed, 1999; Cooke-Davies 2002: Shenhar et al. 2001) The most famous example may perhaps be the Sydney Opera House. The project exceeded the budget and it took over 15
years to finish the building, but it is now one of the most symbolic buildings in Sydney leading the project to be considered as a success (Lim and Mohammed, 1999). This portrays the emergence of customer satisfaction as a key aspect playing crucial part in measuring project success.

### 2.2.3 Project Success: Understanding the key success factors in order to improve project management

Clarke (1999) argues for the importance of identifying CSFs in order to help project managers achieve project success. She argues that previous research has not succeeded in explaining in how CSFs can be applied in order to alleviate problems that might occur during the implementation of projects. Creating an outcome where project efficiency can increase when understanding the different main problems that might arise and how to minimize them. Clarke (1999) conducted a study on the basis of this where she applied the pareto principle, indicating that she only identified the most critical success factors based on previous research that would lead to project success and subsequently applied them on different problem areas. The following CSFs were recognized as the most fundamental with the pareto principle – communication throughout the project, clear objectives and scope, breaking the project into “bite sized chunks” and using project plans as working documents. Leading her to argue that the chance for a project to become successful is when the project managers are familiar with the most common problematic areas when implementing a project. If they had been aware of the problem-areas and how to approach and minimize the challenges that arise in projects then it would facilitate the process (Clarke, 1999).
2.3 Critical Success Factor Framework

This section will present the two most cited and applied frameworks in the literature of Critical Success Factors and Success Criteria. The first framework that we will present is “The project Implementation project” developed by Pinto and Slevin (1987), where they have studied the ten most important critical success factors during project implementation that would enhance the possibilities for project success. The second framework “Multidimensional strategic framework” emerged by Shenhar et al. (2001) focusing on success criteria, in other words, the project objectives that a project should be measured against when determining project success.

2.3.1 The Project Implementation Project (PIP)

Pinto and Slevin (1986, 1987) addressed the issue of lack of generalizability in project management by designing a framework that includes the implementation process and functions as an analytic instrument for project managers to avoid confusion regarding the important critical success factors. Pinto and Slevin (1987) conducted an empirical study based on the previous theoretical study of Schultz, Slevin and Pinto (1987) in order to create a more generic framework. The framework consists of ten critical success factors, which are interrelated to each other, making them all coherent, and in order to achieve success the CSFs needed to be more or less achieved.

The Project Implementation Project- framework consists of ten success factors; Project Mission, Management Support, Project and Schedule/Plans, Client Consultation, Personnel Recruitment, Technical Task, Client Acceptance, Monitoring and Feedback, Communication and lastly Trouble Shooting.
The first factor is Project Mission, refers to the initial goals and the direction in which the project should take. Project Mission answers the question why the project is being implemented.

Top management is the second dimension in the framework and it elucidates the importance of management support. Management should be supportive and provide the necessary resources required for the competition of the project.

The third is Projects and Schedules/Plans. Projects should entail Schedules/Plans in order to create clarity on the different sub-goals and the necessary steps to realize the different goals. The project plans should be followed throughout the project by project-members.

The fourth is Consultation with Client. Many projects take place with more than one party being involved and it is therefore important to have efficient communication with the client during the project for enhancing the chances for project success.

The fifth is Personnel Recruitment. This aspect highlights the importance of recruiting team-members suitable for the project, based on experience and competence among other things.

The sixth is The Technical Task. Project members should obtain technical knowledge and as
well being able to perform different technical tasks throughout the project.

The seventh step is Client Acceptance. This is the act of selling the final project to the intended target. The project can only be perceived as successful when the final user/client approves the project.

The eighth is Feedback and Monitoring. The project needs appropriate control with proper oversight in each stage in order to know the direction the project is taking.

The ninth is communication. Communication is essential in project success – it is therefore crucial that important information is shared, not only with the project-team but as well with the client. All data necessary should be accessible for the project members in order to create a clear understanding.

The tenth is Troubleshooting. Troubleshooting refers to project managers’ ability to handle unexpected crisis or unforeseen events (Slevin and Pinto, 1986; Pinto and Slevin, 1987).
2.3.2 Multidimensional Strategic Framework

As discussed earlier due to iron triangles inadequacy scholars developed additional critical success factors such as different project objectives, for example customer satisfaction. Shenhar et al. (2001) in addition to previous research added dimensions such as value-creation, capability building, and short-and long term.

Shenhar et al. (2001) contends to how a project should be incorporated in the strategic level and not only in the operational level meaning that project managers should not only be focusing on how to complete a project (operational level) but as well on how the project can be beneficial for the organization in terms of profit and market shares. The strategic mind-set will generate better business opportunities since the perspective will focus on the interest of the different stakeholders – the client and the customer. Project managers with this mind-set are constantly trying to improve the process and adjust it in order to create the best possible outcome for the different stakeholders. Whereas operational managed project mainly focus on how to complete the project according to the traditional measures, and thus lacks to see the business perspective.

One of the most applied project-success-frameworks in the literature within project management is based on Shenhar et al. (2001) multidimensional Strategic framework. Due to the framework’s accomplishment in capturing important success criteria in PM and the frameworks wide acceptance among scholars this paper will base the success criteria on Shenhar et al. (2001) multidimensional Strategic Framework. The framework entails four different time horizons, which are short, medium, long and future-period (Figure 5).

The first dimension Shenhar et al. (2001) based their framework on is project efficiency. This dimension includes the traditional measures such as the budget and schedule. However, these measures are often short-term goals, since it might not necessarily mean that a project that has been managed efficiently within the time and budget restriction is considered a success in the long run.

The second criterion is impact on the customer. This dimension explains the importance of meeting performance measurements such as customers’ demand and as well receiving a high customer satisfaction.
The third dimension *benefit to the performing organization* is the benefits connected to the organizations market shares, profits and other ratios that can be linked to the financial results.

Lastly, *preparing for the future* deals with both the direct result on the business such as profits and market share and the other perspective focuses on the long-term benefits for a company. The latter analyses how a finished project can help a company prepare for future opportunities and challenges – in other words, are there any aspects that can be beneficial for the company in the future? Worth mentioning is that Shenhar et al. (2001) outcome concluded that the customer satisfaction was the most decisive aspect when determining project success.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Success dimension</th>
<th>Measures</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Project efficiency</td>
<td>Meeting schedule goal</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting budget goal</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Impact on the customer</td>
<td>Meeting functional performance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Meeting technical specifications</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fulfilling customer needs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Solving a customer’s problem</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The customer is using the product</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Customer satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Business success</td>
<td>Commercial success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creating a large market share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Preparing for the future</td>
<td>Creating a new market</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Creating a new product line</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Developing a new technology</td>
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*Figure 4. Shenhar et al. (2001) multidimensional strategic framework*
2.4 Discussion on critical success factors

Previous research focused in the early stages on the traditional measurements such as cost, time and quality. Scholars soon came to realize that the traditional measurements were not sufficient in order to determine project success, and thus developed success factors and success criteria. Pinto and Slevin (1987) created a generic framework regarding critical success factors, identifying ten crucial aspects in project management that are important to consider in order increase project success, Project Mission, Management Support, Project and Schedule/Plans, Client Consultation, Personnel Recruitment, Technical Task, Client Acceptance, Monitoring and Feedback, Communication and lastly Trouble Shooting. Shenhar et al. (2001) developed a multidimensional strategic framework where they identified four different success criteria: project efficiency, impact on customer, business success and preparing for the future. Thus, the first framework deals with the project management of the project and the other deals with the criteria that the project should be measured against. Further, a successful project management can enhance the chances for project success, it is therefore important to consider both aspects.
Since this paper focus lies within the Factor School, the theoretical framework used to analyze the data with was based on both Pinto and Slevin’s (1987) and Shenhar et al. (2001) frameworks. Pinto and Slevin’s (1987) framework was applied when analyzing the project management of the project (Success Factors). Shenhar et al. (2001) framework was applied when analyzing the Project objectives (Success Criteria) see figure 6. Additionally, we have also put focus on the project life cycle to identify how much focus project managers consider the different aspects during the project life-cycle; initiation, planning, execution or development, and project termination. Since our research question is “How do project managers use Critical Success Factors and Success Criteria during a project?” this conceptual framework (figure 6) enabled us to analyse the different success factors during the implementation and the success criteria.

Figure 6 The Conceptual Framework: Success Factors and Success Criteria
3 Method

In this study we have used case embedded studies since we analyse three projects within a firm. We used data triangulation, which consisted of semi-structured interviews with the project manager, a project member and documentation from respective project, such as financial reports in order to improve the validity and reliability of the different statements. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to understand how project managers work with CSF during the implementation and when evaluating the project. We analysed the data by first providing an empirical description of each project based on the obtained interview data. The second step of our analysis was a cross-analysis, where we analysed the three projects similarities and differences based on CSFs and SC.

3.1 Embedded Case study

Yin (2009) defines an embedded case study as a study that contains two or more sub-units of analysis. This inquiry is a case embedded study and it is of an exploratory character. Its context is Project Management, the Case is a PR-firm, and the units of analysis are the projects, and individual project management.

A case study enables the possibility to collect data from more than three sources, triangulation, which in turn creates more reliable conclusions. The data triangulation obtained in this thesis derives from three sources: project manager, project members and documents. The purpose with the triangulation is to create a common truth by grasping different perspectives and adding objective data. The triangular process implements and validates data within a case study through the use and verification of different relevant source. More importantly we used triangulation in order to ensure the reliability and consistency of the data no matter whom we ask or which source we use. Thus, triangulation confirms, reduces biases and this subsequently leads to more objective data (Holtzhausen, 2001; Yin, 2009).

A qualitative study’s primary objective is to obtain a richer comprehension of a certain phenomenon (Farquhar, 2012), and this paper is of a qualitative character since the aim is to understand how project managers work with projects. The main criticism qualitative studies encounter is the lack of transparency and difficulties in generalizing it further onto a larger population because of subjectivity. Subsequently, we would like to emphasize that the aim is
to explore the research field, in order to discover aspects, which could be of interest for future studies. The transparency can be achieved by careful documentation enabling generalization to be achieved to certain extent.

3.1.1 Semi-structured interviews

We conducted semi-structured interviews due to its many advantages such as flexibility, possibility to follow-up in order to avoid misunderstanding or when wanting to learn more about an answer that might prove relevant.

Semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to cover a specific list of topic areas. The open structure ensures that unexpected facts or attitudes can be easily explored, since it will be executed within an open framework, which will permit a two-way communication (Jarratt, 1996). Semi-structured interviews provide room for flexibility as not all questions imposed are designed and phrased ahead of time. The method allows a deeper length of the description of the project by capturing the project managers’ perception but more importantly it allows a conversation (Galletta 2013). In addition, it gives the informant freedom to express their views in their own expressions, and they have the opportunity to reflect and ask questions if anything is unclear (Schilling, 2015). Through this, we were able to capture the opinions of achieving a successful project, the challenges experienced, and the impact of the succession to the beneficiaries.

We performed a total of six interviews, which included interviews with three project managers and three project members, one project member for respective project. One of the interviews was conducted through Skype. The whole interview was recorded as well. The interviews were held in Swedish since we concluded that people would be more comfortable talking in their native language. Given this, the interviews were transcribed in Swedish because it would provide higher accuracy. The lengths of the interviews with the project managers were approximately 40 minutes, whereas the interviews with the project members were circa 20 minutes. The reason for this was that the project managers were the primary focus. The purpose of the interviews with the project members were mostly done to get their perception of the whole project in order to create a common truth about the project
management. Unfortunately, they were not able to discuss how they worked with CSFs in detail since it was the responsibilities of the project managers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Project Members</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Length of the project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carrie</td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>A – The eagle project</td>
<td>Eight months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>B – The intranet project</td>
<td>Three years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>C – The re-branding project</td>
<td>Two months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>Project member Account Director</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>A – The eagle project</td>
<td>Eight months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibyl</td>
<td>Project member Senior Advisor</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>B – The intranet project</td>
<td>Three years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carl</td>
<td>Project member Junior Consultant</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>C – The re-branding project</td>
<td>Two months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7 Overview of the interviewees: title, project members, project and length of the project

3.2 Data Selection

The first data selection was determining an appropriate company for our thesis. We chose to conduct the study at a PR-firm since a PR-firm is a perfect example of a project-based company, hence a perfect case for what we are studying. Further, the reason for choosing one company is because we wanted to study the projects within one case and context in order to make the environment as constant as possible.

Secondly, we informed the project managers in advance about the purpose with the interview and informed them to choose a project they were most content with, in regards to success. This resulted in three different projects that varied in duration, aim and project process, but were considered as successful. The thesis is only based on three projects because we wanted to explore in detail how the project worked with success factors and success criteria in depth, thus these three project are fairly representative of how project are being conduct in the firm.

Thirdly, the selection of project managers was based due to their seniority and experience within the project management in the company, all had at least six years of experience in
project management. All three project managers are crucial for this thesis since they obtain the relevant knowledge and experience in project management, thus are able to provide valuable insights to this thesis.

Moreover, we are aware that different stakeholders can play a vital part and provide different perspectives on a specific project, however, since the theoretical framework is focused on the implementation of project – targeting project success by project management – we decided to stay consistent with the theory of this study. Project managers are able to provide insights on how the project was managed during the project life cycle.

3.3 Data Collection

The first step in data collection was recording the interviews and testing them before deploying. The smartphones were configured in flight mode to ensure that the recording exercise was not interrupted. Secondly, since the interviews were held in Swedish the transcriptions were in Swedish as well in order to achieve accuracy. Disfluencies such as “uhm, mm, aaa, eee” were not included. Thirdly, after the first transcription we listened to the recordings once more in order to ensure that we had not forgotten anything while transcribing, and to make sure that we had heard everything correctly. The transcription of the recorded interviews and the rationale behind the recording were done to eliminate bias when taking notes. Furthermore, we translated the data in English when writing the empirical description. We did not translate the whole interviews in English, but only the parts we found to be of relevance for our thesis. The data and perceptions were confirmed with the respondents via copies of the paper, which raised the possibility of receiving constructive critique from the interviewees on whether our interpretations were right or not, thereby increasing validity and reliability. Lastly, the company’s financial controller provided documents regarding each project, which entailed financial- and time schedule information. The documents included detailed information on, for instance, how much time each person spent on the project, which we could add in objective and complementary data.
3.4 Data Analysis

The data analysis is divided in two sections – how we analyzed the interview data and how we structured the analysis. In the first section we analyzed the data from the interviews by dividing the data into themes and words. This was done to compare the right information with respective respondent and as well create a clearer distinction to the theoretical framework. In the second step we described each case separately in the empirical description based on the interview data. We then continued the analyze by comparing respective project, in chapter 5 Analysis and Discussion, by looking at the different dimensions in our conceptual framework in order to identify any similarities or variations in how the project managers were conducting respective project.

3.4.1 Interview data analysis

The first step in the data analysis was to become familiar with the data obtained from the interviews, which meant going through the transcriptions in order to get an overview of the information. We re-read the material several times in order to comprehend the information. During the familiarization of the data, we took notes about information we considered important, and this was conducted in order to identify possible patterns and themes.

In the second step, we created initial coding by labeling information. The reasoning behind this coding was conducted in order to identify repetitive words, something that was expressed as important by the respondents and labeling information that we considered to be interesting, or if the interviewees touched upon topics that were discussed in our literature review or conceptual framework. These labels were for instance repetitive words such as meetings, schedule, budget, customer satisfaction and as well statements that the interviewees expressed as important e.g. “the most important thing is” or “this is crucial”.

The third step was about conceptualizing the data based on the previous steps by creating themes. The themes were founded on the dimensions in the CSF and SC framework. The themes were for instance: meetings, communication, customer satisfactions, processes and KPIs.
In the fourth step, relationships were created between the established themes in step three, which shaped new heading themes that were related to each other. For instance, the themes that were created in step three were, problems, obstacles, crisis, and unawareness. According to us, they were related and were therefore classified as Trouble-Shooting – a success factor that is part of the CSF and SC framework (Lofland and Lofland, 1995; Kvale and Brinkmann, 1997; Bryman, 2012).

3.4.2 Comparative analysis

In chapter 4, Empirical Description, each project was described separately and the information was based on interview data analysis. The description of each case highlights how the project managers worked with respective Critical Success Factor and Success Criteria during the project’s life cycle. The empirical description was created in order for the reader to follow our reasoning easier in the results, and more importantly receive knowledge of the projects.

In chapter 5, Analysis and Discussion, a comparative analysis was conducted. Firstly, a comparison was directed on how the project managers worked with the success factors during a project’s life cycle, starting with conceptualization, planning, execution and lastly termination. Secondly, a comparison was performed on how the project managers worked with the success criteria, which is the evaluation of the project.

3.5 Validity and reliability

The research involves qualitative data generated from the semi-structured interviews and documents. In reference to Bryman (2012) a research paper should be characterized with different criteria: credibility, dependability conformability and transferability. These criteria were taken into account when conducting the paper.

Credibility is used to ensure the authenticity as an element of validity in the qualitative data (Farquhar, 2012). Farquhar (2012) explains that to achieve credibility the study must demonstrate recognized and suitable research methods. This study is an embedded case study with data triangulation. We adhered to well-established research methods by applying
embedded case study with triangulation and demonstrated this thoroughly. Moreover, to ensure the credibility of our conclusions we provided the interviewees with the results to confirm that we have interpreted the interviews correctly and are able to receive conformation from the interview object that our analysis was in accordance with what they meant to say. The confirmation enhanced the thesis trustworthiness and credibility regarding our conclusions (Cope, 2014).

Dependability is more similar to reliability but ensures that the results achieved will be similar if the paper would be replicated. In reference to (Yin, 2013) he shows more concerns on careful documentation and references on the data as they create pellucidity. In this research, dependability was achieved by explaining the thesis’ method carefully. We demonstrated how we applied our research method and how the data was analyzed. One must consider that the results might not be exactly the same since the data is built on perceptions. We also documented and referenced the data to create transparency. We demonstrated the research process as comprehensive as possible via explanation of the theory and the way we would analyze the data obtained from the respondents (Morse et al. 2002; Yin, 2013).

Transferability refers to an external validity that is when the conclusions or results from our paper could be applied in a different environment – generalization (Pandey and Patnaik, 2014). In our qualitative study we have demonstrated our method, context, and as well assumptions that are in focus to create transferability.

The Conformability confirms that the findings and the conclusions are not based on a personal perspective (Pandey and Patnaik, 2014). Conformability was achieved by demonstrating each step of the process thoroughly, for instance by demonstrating the analysis of the interview data and the reasoning behind the results. The thesis findings are a reflection of the data obtained rather than personal perspective.
3.5.1 Ethical Dilemmas

Farquhar (2012) and Bryman (2012) asserted that ethical principles should be considered when a researcher is using interviews as a method of collecting data. There are various types of ethical dilemmas that researchers encounter in their studies as differing types of conflicting interests in some scenarios and such situation may include the interest of the researcher to gain new knowledge, and the interests of the participants of the research to have their privacy and integrity protected in the research (Gustafsson et al. 2011). Our research strived to make sure that the respondents were respected and note the ethics. This was achieved through maintaining the ethical dilemmas in the paper based on relevant criteria: Information, Confidentiality, Anonymity, Utilization and Concurrence (Bryman, 2012).

Information deals with the responsibility of the researchers to inform the respondent about the purpose of the research and what is expected of them. This was achieved by contacting the respondent in advance and explaining the aim of the thesis, the purpose of the interviews, and in turn receives approval of participation.

Confidentiality concerns protection of information that is provided by the respondent from reaching unauthorized hands. We have carefully stored the information we obtained from the interviews and as well created a password folder so no unauthorized person could access the documents.

Anonymity was achieved by creating fictive names for the respondents, the projects, cities/countries they referred to, and the company where we performed our study. This was done in order to eliminate the risk of anyone tracing back any of the information to the PR-company or the people that participated in the interview.

Utilization is about informing the respondent on how the answers they provide will be utilized in the study. We have informed the informants in advance about the purpose the interviews and how the data will be utilized.

Then finally, concurrence encompasses the approval of the respondent to participate in the study so that they are aware of the research and that they gather enough time to obtain all
relevant information (Bryman, 2012). We also let the respondents know that they were free to skip any questions that they were uncomfortable answering and informed them that those who wish to have the transcribed interviews or the final study would be able to receive them.

3.5.2 Critical approach on the interviewees

The data utilized in this research was based on interview data, in other words the perceptions of the respondents. It is therefore vital to have a critical approach when determining the accuracy of the information received from the respondents to achieve high validity. Our research study utilized criteria proposed by Jacobsen (2002) to achieve this purpose, which are: context, knowledge, presence and will.

Context answers the questions of whether the interview was conducted without interruption, whether the respondents were comfortable with the interview questions and their answers. The criteria regarding context was achieved, as there were no cases of interruptions during the interviews. The respondents were contacted in advance to inform them about the purpose with the study and interview, on which they declared their approval and thus we can say that the respondents were comfortable while giving out their responses.

Knowledge is the implication that the respondent can thoroughly answer and offer information that is relevant to the purpose of the paper. It implicates that the respondent has the necessary knowledge to contribute to the study. In regards to knowledge, the respondents were considered to have provided necessary and useful responses. They answered the questions thoroughly adhering to the criterions.

Presence is the implication of whether the respondent is the primary source of the information and whether he/she experienced the events under discussion. Regarding presence the respondents narrated examples of various experiences that they had faced. In doing so, the respondents also highlighted different times and places that we think made the answers trustworthy. We therefore believe that the respondents were the primary source of information.
Will is whether the respondent provides useful, honest answers and understands the information by free-will. In the discussion and analysis of the above criteria, we thought that the answers provided by the respondents were honest and that they understood the information as they had agreed to participate in the interviews. Hence, we considered that they were willing to help our study incorporate the necessary information.
4 Empirical

This chapter will discuss each project separately starting with an abbreviation of each project respectively. Followed by a description on how the project managers worked with success factors, and lastly a presentation of how the project managers worked with the success criteria. In order to clarify, the fictive name for the PR-firm is A&Q, this is the name we will refer to throughout the thesis.

4.1 Project A – The Eagle Project

The Eagle Project was about constructing a program concerning the impact of foreign politics on Swedish policies. The project was an internal branding project where the aim was to promote awareness on A&Q their competences and their business offers among top executives within communication. The unique characteristics of the project was that A&Q constructed the program, and then pitched it to the top executives, usually it works the other way around, the client is requesting a service and then selects a consultancy firm to carry through the tasks. Moreover, idea behind the project originated from one of the company’s sisterorganizations that had previously conducted a similar project. The duration of the program was eight months and there were two people working on the project, Carrie and Peter. It was funded internally by finance, through the income they received from the participants and those who joined the program. It was implemented by an assigned group of employees within the field of Public Affairs that chose to join in on the program. To investigate the affect of foreign politics on Swedish policies, they travelled to different countries (one country per program) and networked with influential business personas and politicians.

4.1.1 Project Management

The project manager, Carrie, did not consider the Eagle project to be ideal when it came to the implementation due to several reasons. Carrie explained how the project was unstructured from the first day until the last day, indicating that they did not have a plan, goal/s or KPIs or a schedule when initiating the project. According to Carrie the cause was the late final decision from Finance department. In order for the project to be launched they had to get an “OK” from the Finance department since the project would only be partly financed by the participants and the rest would be A&Q’s responsibility, leading Carrie and Peter to work on
the project-based on many unbillable hours. In the consultancy industry the ideal is to be able to bill every hour you work on the client and since the team members would work unbillable hours on the project it created a extensive discussion on whether this project would generate other beneficiaries such as value adding or awareness. The initial process consisted of more than three months discussion on whether to implement the project or not. When they finally received the “OK” from the Finance department, Carrie explained that it was “all hands on deck” – that there was no time for structuring up the internal process since they were already behind schedule. All of their focus was put on the most important aspect of this project, which was to structure and organize the program for the trip. That included booking speakers and meetings with different political and business personas. Peter and Carrie’s emphasis was on creating a program and schedule for the actual execution-phase, regarding that the program was to be pitched to top executives, making it essential for the program to be held to certain (high) standards.

The internal process was ad-hoc and flexible – they worked with different assignments as they emerged. Carrie and Peter had a positive attitude towards the teamwork, partly because both of them had a mindset of “getting things done”, which entailed staying in the office after working hours, and great communication although they did not have a structured process. They sit next to each other, which enabled them to discuss different matters immediately and in this way they both briefed each other throughout the process. As a result their briefing meetings were short and more action-oriented with the thought of, “what should we do next?”. This allowed them to deal with different challenges during the project.

For instance, A&Q’s rivals offered similar programs during the same period of time and their competitors had already finalized their participation list when A&Q got the final decision from the Finance department. It created difficulties for A&Q to find participants. Both Carrie and Peter explained that they underestimated how easy it was to find participants for this type of program. However, as previously mentioned a similar project had already been conducted by their sister-organization, whom they raised this particular concern – the difficulty in finding participants – which somewhat prepared them for the challenge. A&Q decided to collaborate with another well-known organization that is within the communication industry. This organization has great legitimacy in the business and most importantly it has an extensive network, which facilitated the process of getting participants to join the project and
in turn permitting the continuance of the project. Furthermore, during the process a speaker cancelled in the last second, which Carrie mentioned to Peter. Peter was able to hire a new speaker and thus solve the issue because of his external contacts. As aforementioned and conferring to Peter and Carrie, the teamwork they had played a key role in the execution of the project. After finalizing the project they had an evaluation following the week of project termination where they discussed aspects such as improvements areas and learning points (Carrie, 2017; Peter, 2017).

4.1.2 Project Objectives

The project was considered a success rendering Carrie and Peter, and this was founded on the high customer satisfaction they received. Carrie regarded high customer satisfaction as the coveted outcome of the project. Continuing, the project did not exceed the cost budget received from the Finance department. There was a lot of attention on controlling the budget throughout the project since one of the requirements for conducting the project was that the expenses would not exceed the initial cost suggestions. The execution-phase of the Eagle Project was travelling to Sokeland\(^1\) for the different activities and thus it would be impossible to exceed the time schedule on this matter because they had already booked the flight, arranged conferences with different speakers – once again highlighting the importance of the time schedule when executing the program for the participants. Nevertheless, their internal time schedule was not strict as Carrie explained that they could stay and work evenings just to finish different assignments. Peter and Carrie informed that they overestimated the time that needed to be spent on the project, especially when it came to the little practical things. Both of them mentioned that if they would manage this type of project again, they would consider the practical aspects, as well as better planning in advance.

Another positive outcome with the project was the connections made during the project. The aim of the project was to raise awareness about A&Q and their business among different top executives where Carrie and Peter believed they succeeded in doing this. More importantly they explained that after this trip the participants might consider them as a potential partners in the future because they appreciated their work. Peter also mentioned, to illustrate the success the project had, that a client that had been on the project called up Peter three months
after and asked whether they could do a similar project. Peter explained that there are current
discussions about conducting a similar project. (Carrie, 2017; Peter, 2017).

4.2 Project B – The intranet project

Project B, the Intranet project, was where the client hired the consultancy firm in order for
them to improve their internal communication by making the clients’ intranet more efficient.
The project lasted for about three years, where the work was executed during business hours.
The team consisted of clients as well as employees from the consultancy firm. As in the
traditional sense, the client financed the project and the consultants were paid by the hour.

4.2.1 Project Management

Mary, the project manager, explained how the whole project management process was
structured meaning that the project followed a plan with a mission, goals, deadlines and so
forth. Before working on the project the client provided the project manager with an initial
assignment – a so-called project description. Mary worked on this project description for
approximately three months before launching it. It entailed information about the purpose of
the project and the different goals. Mary gathered this information mostly through interviews
and then crafted an initial overview of the project-plan. This first step was part of the overall
project-plan and it was also demanded from the client. In addition, the project description
included pre-defined goals, a schedule and the clarification of the different roles of
responsibility. The second step was the personnel recruitment of people with relevant
competences for the different positions in the team. First, Mary appointed the relevant people
for the positions where the personnel were supposed to work internally at the client’s firm,
and then the remaining positions were filled with consultants.

The communication between the project members and the client was according to Mary and
Sybil (Senior Advisor) one of the most crucial aspect to generate success. Mary explained
that she had a log where she charted every week’s work in, what they would do the following
week and any potential challenges they might encounter. This status update was for the
executive management, for them to be up to date during the whole process. It was also a way

1 Fictive country name
for Mary to have an overview of the overall project process. As Mary stated, “*It is so important to always be aware of what is happening, for instance if we encounter a problem then it is easier to follow the problem and deal with the problem*” (Mary, 2017).

Mary and Sybil explained that the communication with the client was equally important as the communication within the team. In this project, Sybil had the client-advisory role, which meant that she was responsible for discussing diverse matters with the client. Sybil mentioned that it is imperative to always involve the client as well as to inform the client and the project-members about different topics. Mary explained that for an ideal project manager and consultant, it is crucial to establish a strong relationship with the client by being congenial and dedicated through, for instance, answering e-mails with confirmations and providing the client with a continuous status update. The project-members also had access to the information concerning the project, thus eliminating the presence of the feeling of uncertainty for the client because there was no confidential information. Mary additionally arranged meetings every week for balancing the involved parties work performance. Since all of them worked closely, they sat in the same room, Mary clarified that their was no need for feedback because everything was discussed on set – if someone had any questions to raise they could just “ask straight away” (Mary 2017; Sibyl 2017).

### 4.2.2 Project Objectives

Regarding the project objectives they were measured against the traditional measures, such as, the time schedule and the budget. They also incorporated the so-called *proof of concepts*, where they were measured against the *soft values*. The proof of concepts was a document put together by the project-team before the project begun, where they stated what each process would achieve a goal and how they would go about achieving it. The document represented a set of guidelines that they would adhere to before implementing a process – is this process adequate to achieve goal A? If yes → continue, if no → change the process to generate the initial goal.

Mary also mentioned the importance of focusing on the budget and time schedule during the whole process. “*During the project, before the project budget was met, we realized that we*
needed to spend more time on a specific part in order for the project to be good. So I went to negotiate for more money before the budget was over, which generated 1 million SEK extra for the project.” (Mary, 2017). She explained the importance of predicting probable challenges and outcomes, and always to be flexible when it comes to changes as the example above when she negotiated more money for the project. Continuing, she stresses that good project managers never take money from the existing budget to spend it on something that was not initially included in the budget. If project managers do so, they will compromise the budget and it would reflect poorly on the project team by indicating a sense of bad judgement and bad budget planning. Emphasizing the significance of negotiations for additional capital for the project before it runs out, if the project manager would identify need for more time on different tasks or other aspects within the project.

High client satisfaction led Mary to classify the project as a success. The client praised the project team continuously during the time of the project and showed great appreciation for their advice on the matters. Mary said that the client took them out for dinner several times to show their gratitude and they also arranged a party when the project was over. This was a token of high client satisfaction for Mary, since the responsibility for these types of activities naturally is rested upon the consultants. The project team did not create any KPI for the customer satisfaction, but regarding that the client praised them during the whole process as well as after finishing the project, the team felt that this was confirmation enough to conclude the project as a success. Although the project did not create further business opportunities Mary constituted that she had no doubt that the client would have them in mind if a similar projects would come along (Mary 2017; Sibyl 2017).
4.3 Project 3 – The Re-branding project

A&Q won the Re-branding Project by participating in a pitch. A&Q were invited to participate in a pitch by a client where the company together with other companies pitched their idea to the client. The client wanted to re-brand and position their product as a premium-product in the Swedish market. A&Q had one week to present a communication strategy for the client. The project consisted of five persons: Project Manager, Account Executive Director, Account Executive and Junior Account Executive – and entailed an exhibition in the middle of Rior Central Station and a social media competition. It lasted approximately for two months.

4.3.1 Project Management

Since A&Q were invited to a pitch, they needed to create an overall communication strategy of how they planned to go about it in order to achieve the client’s ambition. A&Q had one week to create a strategy, which included a clear mission, plan/schedule for the project, execution strategy and how to measure the goals. The project team was also determined during the first pitch week, which was decided by Anna, the project manager, together with the Account Director. It meant that when A&Q won the pitch they had already stated the mission, the goal with the project, had an overall schedule as well as established the execution strategy. Anna explained that she had to create a more detailed plan and schedule over the process since the first plan was just an overall schedule, which included respective project-members responsibility areas. This project-plan was updated during the process and respective person in the project needed to deliver a status update every day in order for the other members to follow every step in the process and more importantly where they were in the process. One of the project members, Carl, also mentioned how the project-plan and the daily meetings facilitated the communication and improved the teamwork since it provided an insight of everyone’s work and when something occurred they could easily step in and help one another. Anna considered a detailed project plan to be crucial, not only internally, but also externally for the client for them to view which point the project-team have reached in the process and who is responsible for the different areas. Both Anna and Carl mentioned that there is a need for flexibility no matter how detailed ones schedule is, since one cannot

2 Fictive city name
predict unforeseen events that might deviate from the original schedule. It is therefore crucial to update and inform the team-members in case of obstacles or other issues that might prolong the process. Anna mentioned that they were adhering to the original schedule relatively well as everyone performed well in their roles and were “on-top of things” when unexpected events occurred. Moreover, she added that since they had a tight schedule they needed to deal with everything immediately to prevent the problems from escalating no matter the deadline.

Anna stresses communication as pertinent and she considered the communication as fruitful throughout the project. They had daily meetings, which lasted about ten minutes, just for everyone in the team to present a short briefing and raise concerns. The daily ten-minute-meetings were important for the reason that it was desirable for everyone to be on track with what needed to be done and eventual changes. The daily meetings also included feedback on comments along the process, and enabled the client to be up to date regularly by phone and e-mail status updates with bullet points on what had been done and what was about to be done.

An interesting aspect is that in this case the firm needed to hire an external party for the social media competition as well as hire event personnel. Both Anna and Carl mentioned that one of the main reasons for why the project was so successful was due to the great coordination between the different parties, in spite of the occurrence of obstacles, as they managed to solve them (Anna, 2017; Carl 2017).

4.3.2 Project Objectives

“It was a very successful project and the client was very happy and explicitly said that they wanted to work with us in the future. We did not exceed budget for costs, but we did however exceed the budget when it came to our fees – that is time spent on the project” (Anna, 2017).

The client’s satisfaction with the outcome of the project was a product of the project team’s effort that made them exceed all their KPIs with the project. The KPIs that were stated in the beginning together with the client was the amount of participants visiting the exhibition, the amount of participants that participated in the social media-contest, and the publicity for earned media. Anna explained the importance of having measureable KPIs for a project, not
only the traditional ones such as budget and time but other KPIs that can measure the success of the project as well.

Anna constituted that they did manage to meet the cost budget but exceeded the internal budget for their fees, which means that they spent more time on the project than they got paid for. This was said to be the first time they ever conducted a project of this character and the whole project was a learning-process for them as well, and that was the reason for exceeding the internal budget- and time schedule. Although the project generated an income, it did not generate an immediate profit for the company since the consultants had to work more on the project than they got paid for. The real beneficiary with the project was that A&Q could use this project as a reference in order to win other pitches. Anna concluded that they often used this project when pitching other clients and this project is especially appreciated by other clients, which resulted in multiple A&Q client-wins. Furthermore, Anna explained the importance of customer satisfaction in a project. The client was happy and willing to be a reference for A&Q in further pitches because the client was pleased with the outcome of the project as well as the team-effort. (Anna, 2017; Carl, 2017).
5 Analysis and Discussion

In this chapter all three project will be discussed based on the frameworks of success factors and success criteria. The discussion will be founded on the similarities and differences between how the projects were managed (project management) followed by a debate on how the project used each success factor during the project life cycle. Lastly, the chapter will be concluded through a dialogue on how the project managers evaluated the project in order to determine project success (the success criteria).

5.1 Project Management

The likelihood for a project to be successful increases when the project management has been successful. However, a successful project management cannot prevent a project from failure, since there might be other external factors affecting the process (De Wit, 1988; Lim and Mohamed, 1999). Pinto and Slevin’s (1987) ten critical success factors emerged in order to identify the critical factors that project managers should be aware of to produce a successful project. Comparing all three projects, all of them varied in project management. Leading the discussion to be inaugurated with the topics of project life cycle, conceptualization, planning, execution and termination.
“... for me it is important that a project needs to be successful from the start, and that includes very detailed and clear stated roles of responsibilities. In order for everyone to know, both internally but also for the client to know who does what, and that everyone is aware of their responsibilities. So we developed a very clear plan...” (Anna, 2017).

One of Pinto and Slevin’s (1987) success factors emphasize the importance of having a project mission and schedule/plan throughout the project. Clarke (1999) similarly identified this as being important for achieving project goals. His four most important factors were, communication throughout the project, clear objectives and scope, breaking the project into “bite sized chunks” and using project plans as working documents. These four factors are imperative in order to eliminate or minimize obstacles that might arise.

In Project B and Project C the project managers stated the project mission in advance, before initiating the project. Project B was assigned to perform this way because they were hired to create a project-plan, while in Project C they had to construct a project-plan before approaching the client since they were invited to a pitch. Both of the respective project-plans were comprehensive and divided into different levels. Anna had, for instance, daily meetings to ensure that involved parties were on the right path, while also inviting the opportunity for dialogue and to raise concerns. To constitute that all participants followed the path, the project-team had a shared document where everyone logged their achievements as they went on with their tasks. The system of using a shared document was also applied in Mary’s project – the so-called proof of concept-document. More importantly both project B and C were working in a way that enabled them to reach different sub-goals and monitor the process. Establishing that the project managers emphasized keeping the documents alive throughout the project stressing it as crucial for the survival of a project because it represented a simplified system where the project managers were able to monitor the process and provide feedback as well as receive feedback during the implementation phase, making it easier to predict challenges and adjust the plan (Pinto and Slevin, 1987).

The Eagle Project did not have a project-plan that included schedule/plans, different sub-goals for the processes. The reason for this was that they did not have enough time to develop a project-plan. The project management was not aligned with what previous research have suggested (Pinto and Slevin, 1987; Clarke, 1999), and thereby not regarded as a success in
the aforementioned dimensions. Carrie did express that the process was unstructured and she mentioned that she did not consider the process to be ideal, but Carrie and Peter did ponder that the project process would work – they never expressed discontent regarding their communication. One explanation for this could be because the project only consisted of two people. They sat next to each other, which enabled them to discuss the project and raise different concerns immediately. The roles of responsibility were also clear and the project-mission as well. Although they did not have it in writing, both knew the purpose of it before working on the project.

Perhaps the size of the project and the amount of people working on the project impacted the importance of having a clearly stated project-plan. Or perhaps, great communication was a result of Carrie and Peter’s positive attitude towards the work – they never left office without finishing their “to-dos”. The only thing both of them mentioned as a learning point was that they overestimated how much time needed to be spent on the project. However, one might argue that if a project-plan was to be developed and broken down into bite-sizes, the process would have been more efficient. In spite of every project manager emphasizing the importance of having a project-plan, they all highlighted the significance of being flexible during the execution-phase.

“... I think that you should always be flexible no matter how detailed and structured you are in the beginning, unforeseen events can happen. There should always be room for flexibility...” (Anna, 2017).

Flexibility is something that Pinto and Slevin (1987) discuss under trouble-shooting by Tatikonda and Rosenthal (2000), and Bonner et al. (2002) as well. In accordance with Pinto and Slevin (1987) they also state the impossible task of foreseeing unexpected events, which is something that the project managers must be aware of. Tatikonda and Rosenthal (2000) deliberate on how there should be a balance between flexibility and firmness, which means that there should be an overall structure by management. The best way to achieve success is in the existence of flexibility. In all three projects unexpected events occurred. In Project A, the Eagle Project, a speaker cancelled in the last minute, which meant that Carrie and Peter needed to find a replacement as soon as possible or else the program would not hold its promise. They found a replacement thanks to external contacts where they reached out to
people within their network. Subsequently, underlining the importance of external contacts and that it is a topic worth discussing, which is oddly not brought up in previous research. In the Eagle Project the obstacles, such as, not getting enough participants to the program and replacing a speaker who cancelled in the last minute, were all solved with the help of external contacts. Indicating that external contacts might play a decisive role a project when consultants encounter obstacles that they are unable to solve by themselves.

Furthermore, Pinto and Slevin (1986) stress the need for both the client and the project team to have regular client consultations. This greatly reinforces the client’s goals in the minds of all the project team members. The company is also able to comprehend the client’s idea on the expectations and ability of the project. In Project B and Project C the client was part of the process continuously – they had regular contact with the client by meetings, sent e-mail updates and had weekly-calls. Another important aspect to consider is the different roles in the project teams. In both Project B and Project A there was a specific person that was in charge of having the primary client communication, whereas the project managers mostly updated the client. It is important to consider because the communication between the client and the Account Director (the one in charge of client communication) needs to be communicated to the whole team or else vital information might be lost in translation. Mary and Anna and the project members Sybil and Carl, all thought that the communication within the group was positive and all information was passed along which facilitated for all project-members to be a part of the process. For instance Sybil was the client advisor in the Intranet Project (Project B) where she noticed that it was one of the managers who were not as content as the other top managers with the process and the decided goals. Sibyl then took the initiative to discuss with her about her concerns during the process. They came to the conclusion that the manager’s requests were out of the project’s scope. Thus, clarifying and identifying concerns that the client might have increased the customer satisfaction because this manager came to the realization that it was not something that could be done in this project making her expectations more realistic. Since Project A was of a different character (internal project), they did not need to consult with the participants of the program. Carrie and Peter decided the structure and the content of the program and the participants only received updates throughout the process.
Additionally, good communication with the client also results in management support. Pinto and Slevin (1987) claim that management support is crucial for project success since the management provides the project-team with the necessary means to improve the process and increase the chances for project success. “We had the trust from the top executives, and everything is built on trust” (Mary, 2017). This was evident in Project B, where Mary reviewed improvement areas with the top management that would result in more time and money. Because the project-team had the management’s trust, the executives accepted the changes and provided them with the resources needed – in this case providing more money and time for executing the additional dimensions.

Moreover, none of the project managers did a comprehensive evaluation after project termination. Carrie was the only one who had a short assessment meeting one week after termination just to conclude and review the project briefly. In spite of the managers mentioning the significance of an evaluation, the other two managers did not have an assessment after they terminated the project. They stated that it was often forgotten and decided not prioritize it considering the client showed to be content before the end of the project.

Another finding in this study was regarding the technical task that is included in the Pinto and Slevin (1987) framework. Technical task usually refers to the project-members having sufficient technology to proceed with the project and that the project-members, in addition to their knowledge, obtain technical knowledge. The project managers, or the project members did not mention the following criteria but they rather discussed recruiting people who possess the right experience or competence for conducting a project depending on the project’s nature. This dimension is perhaps not as applicable on A&Q, or any other consultancy firm. It is important to highlight that Pinto and Slevin’s (1987) study was conducted primarily on R&D firms, making it rather natural that project managers or team-members possessed the technical knowledge. The question here was whether technical task is relevant for A&Q, and perhaps other consultancy firms. On one hand, one might argue that this is not the Project Because firstly the client hires consultancy firms where the requirement of having sufficient technology should lie on the client and not the consultancy firm. Secondly, possessing technical knowledge is not an obligation to have at A&Q. None of the project manager or team members shared a dialogue on the importance of having technical skills, but rather
discussed the importance of having qualities as being a problem-solver and a team-player among other things. On the other hand, one might argue that it all depends on the project. Let us illustrate this with Project B – they were hired to improve a firm’s internal communication by making their intranet more efficient. In order to manage such a project one can argue that the project-team must have pre-existing knowledge of technology to increase the success of a project, hence, making technical knowledge a crucial trait. In this study, the findings were rather that the project manager and the project-members were chosen based on their competence and not necessarily because of their technical knowledge. Technical task is not something that needs to exist in every project, but it rather depends on the project’s character. Consequently, this dimension of success factors is not of high relevance in this study’s findings. The following figures 9, 10 and 11 will demonstrate an overview of how respective project manager use CSFs during the project life cycle.

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<th>Phase 1 Conceptualization</th>
<th>Phase 2 Planning</th>
<th>Phase 3 Execution</th>
<th>Phase 4 Termination</th>
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<td>Top Management Support</td>
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*Figure 10 The CSFs during Project A – The Eagle Project*
### Figure 11 The CSFs during Project B – The Intranet Project

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<th>Phase 1 Conceptualization</th>
<th>Phase 2 Planning</th>
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<td>Top Management Support</td>
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<td>Trouble-shooting</td>
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<td>Top Management Support</td>
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### Figure 12 The CSFs during Project C – The Re-branding project.

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<th>Phase 1 Conceptualization</th>
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<th>Phase 3 Execution</th>
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<td>Project Mission</td>
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<td>Top Management Support</td>
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5.2 Project Objectives

De Wit (1988), Lipovetsky et al. (1997), Atkinson (1999), Lim and Mohammed (1999), and Shenhar et al. (2001) all argue that in order to determine whether a project has been successful or not one must consider the project objectives. Project objectives consider aspects in addition to the iron triangle such as customer satisfaction, short- and long-term goals and consider different stakeholders perspectives.

According to the three project managers in the mentioned projects, and the project members as well, the most important factor for a project to be marked as successful was customer satisfaction. The three project managers stated that their projects could not have been as successful if the clients were not content with the projects. Thus, all the projects were considered successful because they all received a high customer satisfaction.

“... of course it is important to have good profit margins on a project, however, if the client is not satisfied than good profit margins do not mean anything...” (Carrie, 2017).

Furthermore, the three project managers also discussed how crucial it is to exceed the demands, and that it was not enough to meet the initial KPIs. They additionally stated that they exceeded the client’s expectation, which constituted a huge part in the high customer satisfaction they received.

“The budget, time and quality should just be met. No questions asked. It is what the client is paying you for. What makes it a successful project is when you exceed the clients expectations.” (Mary, 2017).

The importance of customer satisfaction is in accordance with Shenhar et al. findings (2001), where project managers did find customer satisfaction to be the most important dimension of project success. There are several reasons for why customer satisfaction is essential, particularly for a consultancy firm, and the first reason is company reputation. Consultancy firms, and A&Q as well, are usually invited to participate in pitches because they have a good reputation. The “word-of-mouth” is decisive for firms because that is how other companies might come to notice them. Therefore the happiness of the client was an aspect all managers
attended to. Secondly, by delivering quality to the client and meeting the demands that were
determined in the beginning generated more business with the current client, as portrayed in
Project B. The project-team was able to sell the project in additional dimensions, a process
that would obviously improve the client’s intranet. Nonetheless, they managed this because
they attained the client’s trust.

Thirdly, high customer satisfaction generates further business for the firm – e.g. the re-
branding project itself did not generate immediate profit to the company since they spent
more time on the project than originally planned, but due to this particular project and to the
high customer satisfaction they received they were able to win new business opportunities.
The client was very pleased with A&Q’s work and consequently they did not mind acting as
a reference for A&Q in future pitches with other clients. Anna explained that they used the
re-branding project several times in other pitches and that they had been able to benefit by
acquiring new clients based on recommendation from their previous client. Additionally, this
is in accordance with what Shenhar et al. (2001) argued that the long-term goals of a certain
project can have a positive impact on the organization in the long-run, which in the long-term
generates success. The long-term goals indicates that companies work on projects that do not
generate immediate profit for the company, but that the same project can be an opportunity
for the firm to win further projects. This goes for Project A as well. Whereas the project did
not generate immediate profit it is probable that they might in the future since the participants
of the program asked if A&Q could conduct a similar project. If A&Q decides to conduct a
similar project they would be able to do it more efficiently in terms of time schedule, but
more importantly they managed to keep good relationship with top executives, which was the
aim of the entire project, and the latter alone is a result of the success in the project. It is
therefore important to evaluate a project months afterwards in order to capture the long-term
benefits a project has had on the company, something that is often neglected.

Although customer satisfaction was the foundation when determining whether a project has
been successful or not, the project managers considered the budget and time schedule to be
important too when determining a project success. In order to discuss the budget and time
schedule in consultancy firms one needs to clarify that there are two budgets to be considered
– the internal A&Q budget and the client’s budget. The amount of hours that consultants
spend on a project is depended on the budget provided by the client. For instance, if a
consultant has four hours, based on the budget, to conduct a job and exceeds it with six hours, the additional two hours become unbillable. It is a disadvantage for the consultancy firm because these two hours could have been spent on another project within the firm. However, it is an advantage when considering customer satisfaction because it shows dedication. Examining the final financial reports, all three projects met the client’s budget, the cost budget for conducting the event and the time schedule of when they were supposed to conduct the project. Project A and Project B did however exceed the internal budget that is how much time they spent on the project.

In Project A, Carrie met the time schedule for the project since the program was structured in such a way that a trip was included to Sokeland and several speakers where booked in advance during their trip, so the time schedule for the program needed to be met. Carrie managed to organize the trip in time and to provide the participants with all relevant information before departure, and she did not exceed the cost-budget. The cost-budget was something that Carrie focused on during the whole process – it was crucial for her not to exceed the cost-budget because that was one of the main reasons for allowing this program. Nonetheless, as both Carrie and Peter mentioned they both overestimated how much time they needed to work on the project – to bee more precise they spent 324 unbillable hours on the project than they were expected to, hours that did not generate any immediate profit to the organization. This is a lot of time considering that consultants bill every time they spend on a project. Carrie and Peter did, consequently, not manage the internal time schedule or the internal consultant fees. As for Project C the project team exceeded the internal time-and budget as well but did manage to meet the client’s budget and time schedule. Once again, Anna focused on the budget throughout the whole process as she checked it every week to monitor that they would not exceed the costs. The project team spent all together 125,25 unbillable hours in total on the re-branding project. The team managed to exceed all other KPIs they had determined in the beginning such as how many that attended the exhibition and participated in the media social competition, and the KPI for earned publicity. Davies and Brady (2000) discuss how firms can improve their project efficiency by repeatability, meaning that companies become more efficient when they conduct similar projects and process since they receive knowledge of the project’s learning curve. The repeatability knowledge is something that is important in this industry, because the assets are the people and their knowledge. Project A and Project C were new projects for the project managers and
for the others in the firm as well. It was the first time they conducted a project of this characters, and thus both project manager, Carrie and Anna, stated several times that if they would conduct the same project or a similar project they would have done it more efficiently.

“It was a challenge for us since several of the elements were completely new to us. We saw this project as a learning process for us, and it is a very good project to have with us in the future in order for us to win similar projects from other clients. We knew from the start that is was an extremely tight budget.” (Anna, 2017).

However, one could argue that all (three) project managers obtained a strategic mind-set. Shenhar et al. (2001) argues that project managers should focus on being strategic, how project managers can see opportunities for improvement throughout the process and not only thinking of how completing the project which is on the operational level. Strategic project managers focus on how to constantly improve the process – customer needs, future advantages i.e. create qualitative results (Shenhar et al. 2001). All three cases demonstrate that the project managers constantly were focusing on providing the best service to the client in order to make the client happy and in order to have the best possible outcome. In the example of Mary, she negotiated more money in order to add an extra dimension to the project which was something that was not included in the beginning but as the project proceeded she identify a dimension that needed to be added to improve the project’s outcome. Thus, creating more added values for the client. Carrie and Anna could, in theory, not have worked all the unbillable hours but they did so because they understood the importance of not only sticking to the original plan, but also being able to adjust to provide quality.

With reference to previous research and to the projects’ outcomes, would the project managers still consider the projects as successful if they would have exceeded the client’s budget? All three cases were perceived as successful according to all project members because they exceeded the client’s expectation and the project managers managed to meet the requirements of the clients’ budget and schedule. In project A and C they had had to work more hours than expected in order to generate the exceeded expectations. Nevertheless, project A and C exceeded the internal budget. Thus, one can say that Project A and C, was a success for the client, since they paid the same amount as they negotiated from the beginning.
Whereas it was not a complete success for A&Q when considering the efficiency and its impact on the company’s profits in the short-run. A project’s overall success may be facilitated through Shenhar et al. (2001) success dimension. Project B did for instance manage the project efficiency and generate exceeded expectation, but they did not win other projects based on this certain project. The project functioned as a learning-experience, providing them with new knowledge and insights for the future. Although Project A and Project C failed at the project efficiency (the short-term goal), they passed all the other dimensions as impact on customer, business success and preparing for the future.

![Figure 13 Shenhar et al.’s (2001) Success Dimension over time](image)

Subsequently, in order to fully evaluate a project’s success according to the multidimensional strategic framework a distinction needs to be made between project success, in the short-and long term, and secondly an evaluation needs to occur after a project is terminated to determine success. In this study, only Carrie evaluated the project together with Peter (a week after termination). This meant that they might have captured the short and medium benefits that the project generated but not the long and future benefits. Based on this study, the projects were perceived as closed when the client decided it was the case, in other words when there was no more work to be done and the client expressed their satisfaction. Anna mentioned that evaluations should be conducted more often because they could produce valuable insights. However, this is not done because it is easily forgotten, or not prioritized. The findings in this study suggest that the project managers were not interested in the long- and future benefits of a project, but only the short and medium term, which is project efficiency (time and cost) and customer satisfaction.
In summation, the results show some discrepancy between what previous research suggests and how project managers actually work with projects. Based on the outcome of the framework it has to be more of an iterative process. This means that during the execution phase project managers must go back to planning and adjusting the schedules as seen in project B because they explore new dimensions for the project. Furthermore, within the success factor framework project management is also about certain control over e.g. the budget and time schedule. This dimension is important to consider especially when it comes to the success of the project management. Thus, the critical success factors and success criteria should be incorporated into one framework such as control of project budget and time schedule. Figure 13 illustrates the results of this study throughout the project life cycle. The figure is a summary of how project managers worked with the different CSFs and SC, and which factors the project managers considered to be important at the different stages.

Figure 14 Descriptive model over the findings
Conclusion

Based on the findings in this study, we could identify that there were variations in how the project managers worked with the success factors during the project life cycle and success criteria. All projects were perceived as successful according to the project managers due to high customer satisfaction. Secondly, the applicability and relevance of the traditional frameworks were not fully applicable on the context of project-based companies. We will subsequently conclude the main important findings in CSFs and SC.

The research question was, how do project managers work with Success Factors and Success Criteria in projects?

Project B and project C were more similar throughout the implementation of the projects than project A. Both Project B and C had pre-defined project missions, a clear-stated schedule/plan that they followed throughout the process. The documents were followed by all team-members and were accessible for everyone and “alive” during all parts of the project life cycle. Furthermore, both projects had regular contact with the client, giving the client status updates making them feel included in the project process as they were permitted to submit their input on the execution. Project A on the other hand, did not have any of the aforementioned. In Project A, they worked in an ad-hoc manner and discussed different matters as they came appeared.

First of all, in all cases the project managers considered the communication to be positive. In Project B and C, all team-members were optimistic towards the communication among the participants since they had a structured process that everyone could follow and had regular meetings, which enabled the team-members to discuss different issues. In project A, the communication was perceived as good even though they did not have any structured schedule or mission. The reason for this was that they worked intimately with each other, which allowed them to raise different concerns immediately and deal with unexpected challenges along the way.
The second finding demonstrates the importance of consulting with the client throughout the project life cycle. The answer for this lies in the character of a PR-firm since they win projects and need to have great communication throughout the process. They are operating on the client’s terms from the beginning. Moreover, initial consultations are important in order to fully grasp the purpose of the projects.

The third finding stresses the importance of trouble-shooting with emphasis on flexibility during the planning and execution phase. Although none of the project managers did have a common structure, all three of them argued for the need of structure but room for flexibility. Moreover, in project A external contacts were crucial in order for them to overcome the different challenges that occurred, and contacts/clients were also an important part in all projects for the attainment of new projects in the future. This is an aspect that should be discussed more in previous literature – the importance of external contacts and the relationship during execution.

Thirdly, Pinto and Slevin (1988) included technical task as a success factor. This was an aspect that was not considered relevant for the project managers or the project members, since the projects vary in their character constituting that it was non-applicable for this company. Technical task, based on this study, may not be applicable for similar project-based industries, since it is not a crucial criterion to have. Pinto and Slevin (1988) conducted their study on R&D industries, which explains the reason for them including this success factor.

Regarding the success criteria, the first finding shows that meeting the client’s budget and time schedule were crucial in order to receive a high customer satisfaction. This finding deviates from what previous literature research has discussed, which is that cost and the time schedule are not the most important aspects when determining project success (De wit, 1988; Mohamed and Lim, 2000; Pinto and Slevin, 1987; Shenhar et al. 2011). This study showed that meeting the budget and time schedule sets the foundation for customer satisfaction.
Secondly, regarding impact on customer, this study’s discoveries present that there are in line with what Shenhar et al. (2001) suggested – that customer satisfaction is the most important dimension when determining project success. An aspect that differs from the framework is that project efficiency is something that the project managers need to control throughout the process, not only after finishing it because there is a risk of creating unprofitability for the PR-firm. Customer satisfaction is important for further business success and the reason for this is because in the PR-industry reputation is key and references as well, in order for the firm to win new projects either by pitches or contacts. Both project A and Project C won new businesses opportunities based on the projects they conducted, which was primarily due to high customer satisfaction they received. Whereas the project did not generate an immediate profit to the organization and they exceeded the internal budget, customer satisfaction helped them win new project. It is important to elaborate more regarding customer satisfaction. We found that customer satisfaction is not only based on the iron triangle - time, schedule and providing quality - but it is rather founded on keeping the client content throughout the process. This is achieved when the consultants have regular contact with the client and consult with them throughout the process.

The third finding within SC demonstrates the importance of not only meeting the expectations but as well exceeding them, which perhaps may lead to exceeding the internal budget (by providing over-servicing). One reason for exceeding the internal budget and time schedule in project A and C was because it was the first-time projects of this character were conducted at the firm, and as Davies and Brady (2000) suggests, there needs to be repeatable solutions in process which is only created when the firm conducts similar projects over and over again.

The fourth finding regards the success criteria framework, more specifically the time-dimension. Shenhar et al.’s (2001) study suggests that the first dimension can be decided immediately after a project has been terminated, which is in accordance with our findings. Considering the second dimension they suggest, it can be decided after the delivery to the client – a couple of months after termination. The third, business impact, can only be decided after one to two years, when the company registers an increase in revenues and sales. This differed a bit in our study, because in project A and Project B, they won new cases within the
year of project termination. And lastly, the fourth dimension preparing for the future can only be determined after a longer time-period – two to five years. This is a bit harder to determine based on our study, since we did not study how they conducted other projects that were similar. We could not decide whether they expanded their knowledge for further projects. None of the project managers had an evaluation under or after finishing the projects. The main reasons for this was because the clients were already content with the results, hence no priority for this issue, which is considered to be important according to Pinto and Slevin (1988). The Project managers only focused on the project efficiency and impact on customer, and did not consider the long-term effects such as business success and preparing for the future. Concluding that the project managers only evaluated the project success based on the first dimensions in Shenhar et al. (2001). The time-dimension is not appropriate in this industry due the fast moving-environment as the time-dimension for evaluating success must be shorter.
6.1 Contribution

This thesis contributed with new practical and theoretical knowledge regarding how project managers work with critical success factors and success criteria in projects. There were two gaps that needed to be filled. The first was the lack of practical studies on how project managers actually work with project management in practice. The second was to determine the relevance and applicability of the traditional frameworks in the context of project-based firms, since no studies have been conducted on project-based firms.

This paper demonstrates that the project managers conduct project management differently, even within the same firm. This implicates that the project managers are not aware of the critical success factor and success criteria-framework we applied in this thesis – in other words they are not aware of CSFs that could enhance both the opportunity for project management success and the overall outcome of project. This paper contributed from a project manager perspective as well, in addition to existing literature, which in turns shows discrepancy.

The second contribution to the academia is of a theoretical character. Our results present that the success factors and success criteria framework are not fully applicable when it comes to the business context PR-firms operate in. The success factors are not adaptable to project-based companies. Regarding the critical success framework there are some dimensions that needed to be added and some that were not of importance according to the project managers. Furthermore, the success criteria time dimension is not relevant to the fast speed in project-based companies because it is not applicable to evaluate whether the project has become successful after two years. In addition, this paper contributed with the suggestion of conducting a more process like model. The process is not static but that one rather needs to be flexible and go back and change within the process if required.
6.2 Limitations and Future research

In this paper we only focused on one perspective within Söderlund’s (2010) seven thoughts of school, which was the Factor School. This meant that we only looked at the factors that would lead to success by targeting management. We only explored how the project managers utilized the different success factors in projects and why they considered these to be important, however we are aware that the outcome of this study would perhaps have differed if we would have included or studied another school such as the Decision School. If were to study the Decision School we would rather have explored the decision-making in the process – why certain decisions were made, for instance the reason for why project managers are not following a rational model but still manage to create a successful project. It is also important to note that in a perfect world every project manager would be able to follow the success factors accordingly, however this is not always the case since we live in a complex world. The conceptual framework function as a guideline to help concretize aspects that might be of importance for project managers.

Secondly, the paper would have benefited from conducting a study at several project-based companies and as well include quantitative surveys to companies within the project-based industry in order to generalize with certainty. This paper can be generalized to some extent since our findings show variation in the traditional frameworks applicability on project-based firms. The same line of arguments goes for a descriptive model over the results where the model can function as a basis for future research.

Consequently, future researchers should focus on closing the gap even further by addressing the limitations in this study. Further studies should explore the importance of the different success factors for project-based companies and how project managers’ work with success factors and success criteria in order to confirm findings such ours. There should be a focus on why there are variations in projects in order to understand the reasoning behind project management and to determine whether it has to do with lack of knowledge of how the success factors should be used in project or if there are other reasons. Further studies should also incorporate different stakeholder perspectives to create a common framework and a better comprehension of the different perspectives regarding project success.
7 References


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Interviews

Project A

Carrie, Project Manager at A&Q PR-firm. Interview 2017-03-10.
Peter, Senior Advisor/Project Member at A&Q PR-firm. Interview 2017-04-08.

Project B

Mary, Project Manager at A&Q PR-firm. Interview 2017-03-17.
Sibyl, Senior Advisor/Project member at A&Q PR-firm. Interview 2017-04-27.

Project C

Anna, Project Manager at A&Q PR-firm. Interview 2017-04-08.
Carl, Junior Account Executive/Project Member at A&Q PR-firm. Interview 2017-04-12.
8 Appendix

8.1 Interview guide

Interview questions for Success Factors and Success Criteria

Describe your position at the company
How long have you worked in your position?

1. Project Management

1.1. Can you please describe a project you’ve managed that you found to be successful?
1.1. What was the aim with the project?
1.2. How long was the project?
1.3. Why did the client need help with the project?

2. Project Mission

2.1. Did you have a project mission?
2.2. Was it important to state in advance a mission for the project?
2.1.1 If yes, why?
2.3. Was the project mission communicated to all team-members?
2.2.1 If yes – how?

3. Management Support

3.1 Could you explain how you worked with the top management from the client’s side?
3.2 Was it important in this project?
3.2.1 If yes, why?

4. Project Schedule/Plan

4.1. Did you work with Schedule/Plans?
4.1.1 Was it important?
4.1.2 If yes, why?
4.2 Could you explain how you worked with schedule/plans for this project?

5. Personnel Recruitment & Technical Competence

5.1. How did you select the people for the project?
5.2. What would you say are the most important competences to have in this project, e.g.
    technical, graphic and so on?
5.3. Was there a mismatch in the team?
    5.3.1 if yes, were you able to solve it?

6. Communication

6.1. Could you tell us about the communication in the project?
6.2. Did you consider communication to be an important part in executing the project – both
    internally and externally?
6.2.1 If yes – why?
6.3. Did all the team-members have the same access to all the information?

7. Monitoring and feedback
7.1. Did you monitor and provide feedback throughout the project?
7.2. If yes, how did you work with feedback/monitoring?

8. Trouble-shooting
8.1. Did unexpected crisis or challenges occur?
8.2. If yes, can you give an example of how you handle it during the project?

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

9. Impact on customer
9.1. How much dialog did you have with the client?
9.2. How important was customer satisfaction in the project?
9.3. How did you evaluate/measure customer satisfaction?

10. Project Efficiency
10.1. How did you work with the measurements (iron triangle) during project X?
10.2. Where there pre-goals before starting the project?
10.3. As a project manager – how much focus did you put on the a) budget b) time c) quality?
10.4. When were you evaluating the measurements?
10.5. Did you fulfill the client’s goal?
10.6. Did you use other measurements in measuring project success?

11. Benefit to the performing organization – Business and Direct Success
11.1. How important was it for the project to be profitable – generate immediate financial result such as profit/income?
11.2. Did the project provide you with other beneficiaries, i.e. improvements within the organization such as project management, market shares etc?

12. Preparing for the future
12.1. During the project and after finishing the project did you generate new ideas for other/future projects or new ways of working?
12.2. Have you, based on the project, been able to receive other projects in the future?

13. Additional comments
13.1. Would you like to add some other information that you considered to be crucial for the project outcome?
8.2 Figures

Figure 1. Söderlund’s (2010) Seven thoughts of school. .......................................................... 12
Figure 2 Lim and Mohammed, 1999. ....................................................................................... 7
Figure 3 The Project Implementation Project (PIP) Framework Pinto and Slevin (1987)...... 18
Figure 4. Shenhar et al. (2001) multidimensional strategic framework .................................. 15
Figure 5 Shenhar et al. (2001) Success Dimension over time................................................. 16
Figure 6 The Conceptual Framework: Success Factors and Success Criteria.................... 23
Figure 7 Overview of the interviewees: title, project members, project and length of the project ............................................................................................................................. 20
Figure 8 The Conceptual Framework: Success Factors and Success Criteria .................. 42
Figure 9 The CSFs during Project A – The Eagle Project.......................................................... 42
Figure 10 The CSFs during Project B – The Intranet Project ................................................... 43
Figure 11 The CSFs during Project C – The Re-branding project ......................................... 43
Figure 12 Shenhar et al.’s (2001) Success Dimension over time ........................................... 48
Figure 13 Descriptive model over the findings ....................................................................... 55